

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon a composite, multi-tier service level agreement (SLA) data structure ~~stored within a computer hardware device~~, the data structure comprising:

a plurality of service offerings data objects having both internal use only service level objectives and external service level objectives; and[[,]]

a plurality of SLA data objects combined into [[a]] single, composite SLA data structure, each of said plurality of SLA data objects corresponding to a specific one of said service offerings, said plurality of SLA data objects in said composite SLA data structure having hierarchical organization based upon dependencies between said service offerings.

2. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium ~~computer hardware device~~ of claim 1, wherein

each of said plurality of SLA data objects corresponds to one of an outsourced service offering, an internal service offering and an external service offering.

3. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium ~~computer hardware device~~ of claim 1, wherein

at least one of said plurality of SLA data objects exposes an external service level objective of a corresponding internal service offering which has been redefined as an internal use only service level objective in an SLA data object at a higher tier in said hierarchical organization.

4. (Currently Amended) A method, within a computer hardware device, of constructing a composite, multi-tier service level agreement (SLA) data structure, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

creating an internal SLA data object for an internal service offering;

further creating an external SLA data object for an external service offering which depends upon said internal service offering;

combining said internal SLA data object with said external SLA data object to form ~~[[a]]~~ said composite SLA data structure; and~~[[,]]~~

arranging said internal and external SLA data objects in a hierarchy within said composite SLA data structure based upon dependencies between said internal and external service offerings to form ~~[[a]]~~ said composite, multi-tier SLA data structure.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising ~~the steps of:~~

~~yet further~~ creating an outsourced SLA data object for an outsourced service offering upon which at least one of said external and internal service offerings depend;

~~further~~ combining said outsourced SLA data object in said composite SLA data structure; and~~[[,]]~~

~~further~~ arranging said outsourced SLA data object along with said internal and external SLA data objects in said hierarchy.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising ~~the steps of~~

redefining an external service level objective in an SLA data object which has been combined and arranged in said composite SLA data structure to an internal use only service level objective.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, further comprising ~~the steps of~~ redefining an external service level objective in an SLA data object which has been combined and arranged in said composite SLA data structure to an internal use only service level objective.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising ~~the step of~~ exposing said composite, multi-tier SLA data structure to a customer over a data communication network.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the arranging ~~step further~~ comprises ~~the step of~~ prohibiting dependency loops within said hierarchy.

10. (Currently Amended) A machine readable storage device having stored thereon a computer program for constructing a composite, multi-tier service level agreement (SLA) data structure, the computer program comprising a routine set of instructions for causing the machine to perform the operations ~~steps~~ of:

creating an internal SLA data object for an internal service offering;

further creating an external SLA data object for an external service offering which depends upon said internal service offering;

combining said internal SLA data object with said external SLA data object to form ~~[[a]]~~ said composite SLA data structure; and,

arranging said internal and external SLA data objects in a hierarchy within said composite SLA data structure based upon dependencies between said internal and external service offerings to form ~~[[a]]~~ said composite, multi-tier SLA data structure.

11. (Currently Amended) The machine readable storage device of claim 10, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

~~yet further~~ creating an outsourced SLA data object for an outsourced service offering upon which at least one of said external and internal service offerings depend;

~~further~~ combining said outsourced SLA data object in said composite SLA data structure; and~~[[,]]~~

~~further~~ arranging said outsourced SLA data object along with said internal and external SLA data objects in said hierarchy.

12. (Currently Amended) The machine readable storage device of claim 10, further comprising ~~the steps of~~

redefining an external service level objective in an SLA data object which has been combined and arranged in said composite SLA data structure to an internal use only service level objective.

13. (Currently Amended) The machine readable storage device of claim 11, further comprising ~~the steps of~~

redefining an external service level objective in an SLA data object which has been combined and arranged in said composite SLA data structure to an internal use only service level objective.

14. (Currently Amended) The machine readable storage device of claim 10, further comprising ~~the step of~~

exposing said composite, multi-tier SLA data structure to a customer over a data communication network.

15. (Currently Amended) The machine readable storage device of claim 10, wherein the arranging ~~step further~~ comprises ~~the step of~~ prohibiting dependency loops within said hierarchy.